

Speaker 1:

It is time for a pause in your day. Welcome to a podcast where we press the pause button on our busy lives for a few moments, and we focus on God's word with Sharon and Nicole. We pray this is a time of refreshing for you. The Sweet Selah Moments Podcast is a cooperative production of Word Radio and Sweet Selah Ministries.

Nicole:

Welcome to Sweet Selah Moments. This is episode 128, Launched. We are studying the book of Acts right now, focusing on the very beginning of the Christian Church. And today we are looking at Peter's amazing sermon in Acts 2 that truly launched the church. Let's talk about Peter for a moment. He's an unlikely guy to preach a sermon that launches a whole movement and church that's been around now for over 2000 years.

Sharon:

He sure was unlikely. (Nicole: I know) I love that Jesus chose him. Peter was a fisherman along with his brother Andrew, and his friends James and John. And he self described himself as a sinful man in one of his early encounters with Jesus, and actually told Jesus to stay away from him because he was too sinful. Nicole, can you read that story for us? I just wanna hear it again. (Yeah) Peter saying that.

Nicole:

Perfect. This story is found in Luke 5:1-11. "One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret" (I dunno, we're gonna say that) "the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. He saw at the water's edge, two boats left there by the fishermen who were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boats. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, put out into deep water and let down the nets for a catch. Simon answered, Master, we've worked all night and haven't caught anything, but because you say so, I will let down the nets. When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled their partners in their other boats to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus's knees and said, Go away from me, Lord. I am a sinful man, for he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken. And so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, don't be afraid. From now on you will fish for people. So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything, and followed him."

Sharon:

Isn't that the craziest story?

Nicole:

They left all that fish.

Sharon:

I know, I've always worried about that. That's a lot of fish.

Nicole:

Hope it didn't go to waste, but,

Sharon:

Hopefully somebody else took care of the fish.

Nicole:

Right. But isn't that, that's such a beautiful story.

Sharon:

So it is, and Peter was called Simon back then. So we, you know, we kinda go back and forth between Simon and Peter. And evidently he was not living the purest of lives. I love that he was so taken aback by Jesus's miracle and Jesus's obvious holiness that he felt he couldn't even be near Jesus. It's like, go away. I am. You don't know who I am, basically. If you knew who I was, you wouldn't have even been nice to me kind of thing. He really is so fascinating. Peter said crazy things at other times, he was impulsive. I love Peter. He put his foot in his mouth. I remember on the Mount of Transfiguration, and you know, Jesus is talking to Elijah and Moses and Peter's like, let's build tents. 'cause he didn't know what else to say and he had to say something. Right.

Nicole:

He had to fill that awkward silence. Oh yeah. Oh, I feel you there, Peter.

Sharon:

Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. So, so, and he was a simple fisherman. He was just fishing. And now he's preaching this incredible sermon. Jesus actually changed his name to Peter, which means rock, and declared that Peter's faith would be part of what he built his church on. And it was. This simple fisherman guy.

Nicole:

I know. And all this is even more amazing to me because when we remember that Peter was the one that denied, he even knew Jesus right before he was killed.

Sharon:

Yeah. He did.

Nicole:

You know, he boasted that he would never desert Jesus just the night before. And then he denied he even knew the Lord.

Sharon:

Yeah. Yeah. So of all the disciples, only one denied him. (Nicole: Yeah) And it's Peter who's now gonna be in charge. I love that. Oh my goodness. (So cool) Our amazing Savior, after his resurrection, purposefully went after Peter. Nicole, the one that had been the bad-est next to Judas (Right) and repeated the miracle of the fish. I mean, there it was again, they didn't catch fish. (Yeah) And then the same miracle again, fed him fish and restored Peter to fellowship. It's such a beautiful passage. It's found in John 21 and I'm gonna read just 15-20, this part where instead of rejecting Peter, as Oh for crying out loud you cannot be faithful to me even right after the Lord's Supper and all these things, instead restoring him. So here it is, verse 15. "When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" And I'm thinking, he means like the fish and all the stuff right there. "Yes Lord. He said, you know that I love you. Jesus said, feed my lambs. Again Jesus said, Simon, son of John, do you love me? He answered, yes Lord. You know that I love you. Jesus said, take care of

my sheep. The third time he said to him, Simon, son of John, do you love me? Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, do you love me? He said, Lord, you know all things. You know that I love you. Jesus said, feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you dressed yourself and you went where you wanted. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go. Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which, (excuse me), by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, follow me." There's the reinstatement. What did he say to begin with? Follow me. Peter dropped his nets and followed him. He denied him three times. Jesus asked the question three times, yes. Do you love me? Will you feed my sheep? And then he warns him. You aren't even gonna be able to dress yourself. You are gonna have no freedom and you're gonna be led where you don't wanna go. So follow me. Okay.

Nicole:

Sounds great.

Sharon:

So here's your last chance, Bud.

Nicole:

Right. Oh, I love that though. He's not just like, Hey, follow me. It's gonna be amazing.

Sharon:

No, no, exactly.

Nicole:

No prosperity gospel there

Sharon:

No prosperity gospel there. Jesus took this flawed human and used him mightily. Today we're going to look at the rest of the sermon Peter preached on Pentecost, which sure doesn't sound like a sinful, get away from me, fisherman man at all. It's so different. After he was filled with the Holy Spirit that swept through like a mighty wind, Peter was a different man. So Nicole, why don't you pick up the story, Acts 2:22 and we'll read back and forth.

Nicole:

All right. "Fellow Israelites, listen to this. Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did among you through him. As you yourselves know."

Sharon:

"This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge. And you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross."

Nicole:

"But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him."

Sharon:

"David said about him, I saw the Lord always before me because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken."

Nicole:

"Therefore, my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices. My body also will rest in hope."

Sharon:

"Because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead. You will not let your holy one see decay."

Nicole:

"You have made known to me the paths of life and you fill me with joy in your presence."

Sharon:

"Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried and his tomb is here to this day."

Nicole:

"But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him an oath, that he would place one of his descendants on his throne."

Sharon:

"Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay."

Nicole:

"God has raised this Jesus to life and we are all witnesses of it."

Sharon:

"Exalted to the right hand of God. He has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear."

Nicole:

"For David did not ascend to heaven. And yet he said, the Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand."

Sharon:

"Until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."

Nicole:

"Therefore, let all Israel be assured of this, God has made this Jesus whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah."

Sharon:

"When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, brothers, what shall we do?"

Nicole:

"Peter replied, repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Sharon:

"The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off. For all whom the Lord our God will call."

Nicole:

"With many other words he warned them and he pleaded with them, save yourselves from this corrupt generation."

Sharon:

"Those who accepted his message were baptized and about 3000 were added to their number that day."

Nicole:

"They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."

Sharon:

"Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles."

Nicole:

"All the believers were together and had everything in common."

Sharon:

"They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need."

Nicole:

"Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts."

Sharon:

"Praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number (which was already 3000 new ones) daily, those who are being saved." Whoa.

Nicole:

Yeah.

Sharon:

That's really cool.

Nicole:

This is a great passage.

Sharon:

I know it. So Nicole, what stood out to you about that sermon?

Nicole:

Oh, I know. So this is not the same Peter that we saw earlier in the beginning of those passages. He's always been outspoken.

Sharon:

Yes. This is true.

Nicole:

He's always said things, but there's a confidence now, in his words. There is a certainty that is not from Peter. That's the Holy Spirit. And to see him being used by God and putting aside his insecurities about being this sinful man that God could not use. (Sharon: Yes. Yes) And he's standing there now in front of all of these believers, boldly proclaiming these powerful words. It's just like, wow. Go Peter. It's just so neat to see him, to see God using Peter and Peter allowing God to work through him.

Sharon:

Yes. Yes.

Nicole:

Beautiful.

Sharon:

A lot of people, I mean, fear of speaking in public is one of the greatest fears. And he is boldly speaking to over 3000 people, evidently.

Nicole:

Yeah, that's right. More than that, 'cause if 3000 came to Christ,

Sharon:

I mean, and he's seen mobs turn against Jesus. So without the Holy Spirit, he could have been terrified.

Nicole:

That's true.

Sharon:

But instead, he's empowered and he is jazzed that they've all come to hear and he's gonna tell him.

Nicole:

Well and he dropped some hard truths too. Like you said, they could have gone after him for that easily.

Sharon:

Oh yeah.

Nicole:

Oh, whom you crucified.

Sharon:

Yeah. That was pretty blunt.

Nicole:

Yeah. So.

Sharon:

It sure was.

Nicole:

Just beautiful, the boldness that he spoke with that.

Sharon:

Yeah. I love that he had that knowledge of the Old Testament so that he could say, do you know what? We all know David. (Nicole: Right) David said these things and part of it was prophecy. Let me show you how it was prophecy.

Nicole:

More of that prophecy revealed.

Sharon:

Yes. Yes.

Nicole:

So fascinating.

Sharon:

Yeah. And that's what had him so excited. And that's, these people that all knew about Jesus having died. I mean it just happened and it was a really big deal. They, some of them, knew people that had seen him after he rose again from the dead too. Right? Because 500 did. So they are definitely engaged. And they're looking at someone who says, I saw him. We saw him. Look at all of us, 'cause there's like 120 of them or however many there were, all of us saw him after he was dead. His body saw no decay. He didn't come back as a zombie. Right.

Nicole:

Right.

Sharon:

He came back with a normal body.

Nicole:

Right.

Sharon:

You know, so very, very cool. And then, the other thing that stood out to me about the sermon was repent, be baptized.

Nicole:

Yes.

Sharon:

Get the Holy Spirit. There's like this three step process there. Repent, turn away from your sinning. (Nicole: Yes) Which he was a sinful man. He knew all about that repentant thing, Peter. (Mm-Hmm. Right) Be baptized. (Yes) And Jesus and his disciples did baptize, as well as John. And then guess what's going to happen? Holy Spirit.

Nicole:

It's like, it just happened to us. And it's amazing.

Sharon:

Yes. It's gonna be in you too.

Nicole:

That must have been fun to preach about that after just having experienced the Holy Spirit.

Sharon:

Yeah. Yeah.

Nicole:

Like that must have been such a powerful surge for them.

Sharon:

Oh, the rush must have been incredible that day.

Nicole:

Amazing.

Sharon:

Just amazing. So the result is 3000 people get saved that day. Nicole, have you ever been in a stadium event where thousands of people got saved?

Nicole:

Maybe not thousands, maybe hundreds.

Sharon:

Oh yeah?

Nicole:

Or less. Yeah. They used to do the, I don't know if they still do them, 'cause I'm old and don't do teen events anymore, but they used to do the Word of Life Super Bowl where they'd take you (Sharon: Oh yes) to different locations all night. You'd go bowling, you'd go ice or roller skating, and then you'd go to a hockey game. And at the end, the middle, I think it was the middle or the end of the hockey game, they'd put out this little red carpet. And this guy would walk out to the middle of the ice and he would preach God's word and people could come down to the ice to accept Jesus. And that was always really amazing to see mass amounts of people going to receive Christ.

Sharon:

Going to receive Christ. Yes.

Nicole:

Because most of our, I think only two churches that we've been to, growing up, ever had like altar calls where people would go. So I've seen some people go forward, and that's always really powerful,

Sharon:

It is.

Nicole:

To see lots of people go down. It's, it's, quite amazing to see.

Sharon:

It's amazing when the Holy Spirit moves in that way. It really is.

Nicole:

Yeah. It's very exciting. How about you?

Sharon:

Yeah. I actually had the privilege of seeing Billy Graham.

Nicole:

Oh, wow.

Sharon:

Yes. I was just a little girl at the time. And it was in Boston. My parents kind of met, well, they didn't meet through Billy Graham. They met at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth, that story, but, okay.

Nicole:

Okay. That's seriously cool. We have to talk about that someday.

Sharon:

Yeah. It was really fun. Yeah. Watching it go by. But Billy Graham was over there at that time, and he was preaching in the Harry Gates Stadium, and my parents were in the Billy Graham Choir.

Nicole:

Oh, wow.

Sharon:

So my mama, who came to know the Lord through my dad's testimony, also got to hear Billy Graham and kind of grew up as a Christian on his preaching.

Nicole:

Wow.

Sharon:

So, when he was coming to Boston, of course they hauled all of us kids, no matter how tiny we were, to go and hear him. And I remember everybody flowing down the aisles too. And I can remember the, I don't know, the electricity in the air, the joy of it, the incredible power of it. It's really something. It really is.

Nicole:

When the Holy Spirit moves there's no denying it.

Sharon:

Oh man. And so really the first crusade was Peter talking to all those people.

Nicole:

Oh right.

Sharon:

And, you know, over 3000 were saved. How many were listening?

Nicole:

Right. I wondered about that.

Sharon:

Yeah. And then after that, it says every day more people were added that were being saved.

Nicole:

Right. Yeah. That's amazing.

Sharon:

So incredible. Okay, well, let's reread the results of what happened after all those people chose to accept Jesus' forgiveness of sins. Can you reread 42-47 of Acts 2?

Nicole:

Yes. "So they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their numbers daily, those who were being saved."

Sharon:

Well, you know, I started to wonder at the beginning, where were they meeting? Right?

Nicole:

Right. That's a lot of people to meet in houses.

Sharon:

I mean I thought 120 was a lot. But now I see they meet in the temple courts in the big crowds.

Nicole:

That makes more sense because these people, the Jewish people weren't incredibly wealthy at the this time.

Sharon:

Right.

Nicole:

Because this is during the Roman occupation. I thought they were struggling.

Sharon:

Not a lot had mansions.

Nicole:

No. Probably. And the ones that did were probably the Pharisees who didn't really wanna

Sharon:

Right. They weren't part of this crowd anyways. But they haven't been thrown out of the Temple yet. They're still Jews.

Nicole:

Oh, right.

Sharon:

So they're allowed to go and the temple was huge. So there were courts you could go to. And that's how I'm sure people were added daily to those who were being saved, 'cause they see this huge crowd of people. They hear the talk about Jesus and I'm sure there were a lot of Peter-like sermons being preached.

Nicole:

Oh, sure. And they could probably hear. Oh, let's go do our regular sacrifice the temple. Wait, what's going on over here?

Sharon:

What's going on over there? Right.

Nicole:

Why are the women and the men together? Hold on.

Sharon:

Yeah. And it says, verse 43, they were filled with all the many wonders and signs performed. (Nicole: Oh) So there's still healings going on. (Wow) There's still wonders and signs. So they're continuing what Jesus did. And it's like, you thought you killed him. He's still here among us. In fact, he now resides within us. His Spirit does. (This is bigger than it was,) And this is even bigger than it was, because there's more of us.

Nicole:

Wow. I wonder what they would've thought. All the Pharisees and people that were trying to stop Jesus, just standing there watching this happen and watching it kind of like a wildfire just spread out of control.

Sharon:

Totally wildfire.

Nicole:

Oh my word. We can't control this.

Sharon:

No.

Nicole:

Like the temple's filled with them and there's, everyone's doing signs and wonders. Like, what is happening?

Sharon:

Unbelievable. Unbelievable time.

Nicole:

So cool.

Sharon:

And they're still finding favor with all the people at this point.

Nicole:

Yeah.

Sharon:

God was gracious. Because eventually, you know, they're scattered and all kinds of hard things happen. But at the beginning, there's like this nurturing time where they found favor. They can be at the temple, they can share the incredible good news. And God keeps adding, adding to the numbers before the dispersion.

Nicole:

Yeah. That's really neat. That is true, 'cause you don't hear them, like the priests aren't coming out yelling at them and throwing them out yet.

Sharon:

Nope, they're not. They're pretty silent. In fact, somewhere in Acts, I don't know if we'll get to it or not in our study of it, it says that many priests came to know Jesus.

Nicole:

I wondered. I wonder how many heard that and it was like, I can't deny this. Look, they're finding the prophecies fulfilled in the scriptures that I know so well.

Sharon:

That they know so well. And also when Jesus died, the curtain was torn in two. That's kind of (Nicole: Oh, that's right) weird. So I wonder how many priests are like, okay. So there was an earthquake that day. It was dark for three hours in the middle of the day, and the curtain was ripped in two. I think that just the signs and wonders the day Jesus died, converted some of those priests as well.

Nicole:

Sure. Yeah. Because they knew the significance of the curtain.

Sharon:

Right now they've got favor. So good.

Nicole:

Amazing.

Sharon:

And I'm assuming that when they broke bread together in homes, they divided up.

Nicole:

We'll meet at your house on Wednesday.

Sharon:

Yes, exactly.

Nicole:

This was amazing. The heart of these early believers to sell their possessions and to meet together. And it said they had everything in common, to be at such a place of harmony, even being different personalities and different lifestyles.

Sharon:

Isn't that amazing?

Nicole:

What an amazing time to be part of that, you know?

Sharon:

Right. And they weren't forced to do it. It wasn't like Communism where now that you joined our church, we're taking all your money.

Nicole:

We wear blue on Wednesdays and on Thursdays we do this. Like, it wasn't this rigid.

Sharon:

No, it was absolutely organic. They're like, oh, this person has a need. I've got more than I need. Let me meet their need.

Nicole:

How beautiful.

Sharon:

Because who's inside them? The Spirit.

Nicole:

Right. They never had that before to guide them.

Sharon:

They've got the compassion of God. They've got the love of God, which is a sacrificial love, not a selfish love. And all of a sudden they're taking care of everybody. So.

Nicole:

That's so neat. There's something, there's something really neat about this early community together and what they, how they did everything together. Breaking of bread, which I'm assuming is just eating together.

Sharon:

Yeah. Yeah.

Nicole:

But there's, I just recently met a pastor and he's starting, starting a church in Portsmouth and they do this. They have a small gathering of people and they have a message and he feeds his little congregation. Every Sunday he puts a meal on for them. And I think that's so beautiful.

Sharon:

Yes.

Nicole:

It's such a sweet thing to eat with fellow believers you know?

Sharon:

It is. Breaking bread together is so important.

Nicole:

Yeah. Like potlucks back in the old---, you know.

Sharon:

Yes.

Nicole:

When we grew up in these old Baptist churches,

Sharon:

Yes. Yes.

Nicole:

It'd be like, I love potluck Sunday.

Sharon:

Absolutely. It's family.

Nicole:

It is, yeah.

Sharon:

It's family hanging out together and eating Aunt Gertrude's weird salad.

Nicole:

Right.

Sharon:

That's just part of it. Right?

Nicole:

The weird Jell-O salad, we're never quite sure---

Sharon:

Yes, the weird Jell-O salad.

Nicole:

But there's something really special in that.

Sharon:

Yeah. There is. I like the four things they were devoted to. Teaching, fellowship, Communion, the Lord's, you know, breaking bread, and prayer.

Nicole:

Oh right.

Sharon:

We still have all four of those rhythms today. When we go to church the pastor teaches us from the sermon. We have Sunday school. We get taught in Sunday school. We have fellowship together, not just then, but when we do projects together, when we're feeding the homeless and going on mission trips and stuff, we take Communion. (Nicole: Right) We break bread together. We remember the Lord's death until he comes and we pray. We still have those rhythms. It's like the heart of church.

Nicole:

It is.

Sharon:

Really.

Nicole:

You need those things to keep us together, united.

Sharon:

Yeah. Yeah. And then the giving, we still give. Right now we're giving towards our food pantry, but we're still giving.

Nicole:

Oh, I love that.

Sharon:

So really, really cool. Okay. Well let's go to our key questions. What's your favorite verse, Nicole? Tell me. Tell me.

Nicole:

Let's see. I have to find it. I liked verse 39, which is, oh, "The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off. For all whom the Lord our God will call". I like that verse 'cause that verse is about me.

Sharon:

It is.

Nicole:

That verse is about us.

Sharon:

You far off person.

Nicole:

Yes. How cool that Peter, did he even know he was talking about us today?

Sharon:

Yeah. Yeah.

Nicole:

And about my children and my grandchildren, if the Lord doesn't return before I have grand babies. I just think that's so amazing that God's plan for salvation was so far reaching

Sharon:

So big.

Nicole:

Beyond what even they knew at that time. He's just talking to this group of Jewish people in front of him, and they're so excited. He had no idea it'd be 2000 years later (Sharon: Yes) that you and I would be excited talking about him, talking about us.

Sharon:

Yeah. That far off.

Nicole:

That far off. And it could still be even farther off still.

Sharon:

It could.

Nicole:

But I just think that verse is so amazing.

Sharon:

It is.

Nicole:

God is so much bigger than us and so much bigger than all the things that we see. He sees this big, beautiful picture. And I can just trust him that if it's another, you know, thousands of years or tomorrow.

Sharon:

That's because he's still got more far-er off-er people.

Nicole:

More far-er off-er. Yes. But how beautiful. I like that verse.

Sharon:

I love that.

Nicole:

How about you?

Sharon:

I chose the second part of verse 46. "They broke bread in their homes and ate together with" (these are my words: glad and sincere hearts.).

Nicole:

Ooh, those are good words.

Sharon:

I thought those are so neat because there's a gladness when we come together, or there should be, if we're filled with the kind of love God has, there will be gladness. Right. Because God loves, he loves really weird, messy people. And so if we're filled with his kind of love, we also love really weird, messy people. And we're glad they love us.

Nicole:

Yes. Being those weird, messy people,

Sharon:

Being those weird, messy people. Yeah. And then I love the sincere hearts. Just the purity of it. You're not putting on, you're not doing it to be comfortable. I mean, they didn't have fancy churches back then. Right?

Nicole:

Right.

Sharon:

Their hearts were just open and sincere and glad to be together and wowed by the fact that Messiah had come, you know? It just was a really crazy happy time.

Nicole:

Oh yeah.

Sharon:

And I love that verse.

Nicole:

Oh, that would be so neat.

Sharon:

Yeah. So, okay, this is what I learned from God from this passage or about God from this passage. And then you can tell us. One, God moves in hearts when we obey his leading to speak. You know, and I find this over and over again when I'm publicly speaking (Nicole: Yes) because oh, nine times out of 10, I don't feel ready for some reason or other. (I know) Somebody's just told me something awful or my daughter's in crisis, or I feel sick, you know? (Right) All the different things. And yet when I obey and open my mouth begging him to fill it with good things he speaks for me. He does that. God moves in hearts when we speak. And even if we don't think we spoke that well, so what? God moves in hearts, even with weird speaking.

Nicole:

Yes. Thank goodness.

Sharon:

He can do that. So that's number one. Number two, God filled their hearts with joy, service and love for each other, the things he filled their hearts with, part of it was gladness. God fills us with gladness. That's something I learned about God. And then the desire to serve and love others. And then, I underlined this, "God added to their number". It was his work. (Nicole: Yep) And I love that the Bible says it that way, you know, Peter might have preached but God's the one that changes hearts. (Yes) God added to their numbers. (Oh, that's so good) So we can always trust him with that. We don't have to, like, if we ever were in a stadium and no one came forward, it wouldn't be on us, if we had prayed. (Right. Right) God is the one that changes hearts.

Nicole:

Well, that's good to remember.

Sharon:

Yeah. Just in case you're ever in a stadium speaking.

Nicole:

Yeah, next time I'm speaking to 10,000 people.

Sharon:

Exactly. So what did you learn about God from this passage?

Nicole:

Oh, I put exactly what you just said.

Sharon:

Oh, no kidding.

Nicole:

Just, you know, God's power to change hearts. Peter had no magic words. It wasn't what he said.

Sharon:

Nope.

Nicole:

And if he said the wrong words, it wouldn't have mattered. God still would've changed the hearts of those people that day, because God gives us what we need. He gives us the words, but even if we botch it, it's God that changes hearts.

Sharon:

It is. And that's such a relief.

Nicole:

It's such a relief.

Sharon:

And in their case, when they initially spoke, he literally gave them words in different languages.

Nicole:

Right.

Sharon:

So it was super him. Because they didn't even know what they were saying. So.

Nicole:

But no, I think that's, I love that. Just, it takes the pressure off of us. We just have to be a willing vessel for God to use.

Sharon:

Yes.

Nicole:

And he does the work, he does the changing. It's not on us. Thank you God.

Sharon:

Exactly. Yep. And that's why the most important prayer is that we are surrendered.

Nicole:

Yes. Right.

Sharon:

It really is. Way more than you know, that we've polished up a speech. It's where's our heart? We need that sincere heart. We do.

Nicole:

Yep. Exactly.

Sharon:

Yeah. So, okay. Well, what did we learn, Nicole, about the early church and how can we apply that to today?

Nicole:

I absolutely was blown away at how close they were. They were such a close community in the beginning.

Sharon:

They were.

Nicole:

They had such a hunger for Jesus. They were just so excited, selling all that they had, meeting together every day in the temple. Like, it just blew me away, their passion (Sharon: Yes) in the beginning, you know? They couldn't stay apart. They wanted to share everything with each other, their meals, their experiences.

Sharon:

They're running to the temple all the time just to be together.

Nicole:

Yeah. And then, oh, there's a need. Let's sell it and give to the needy. I just, they're, their complete devotion to God is (Sharon: Yes) beautiful. And we really could take some lessons from that.

Sharon:

We sure could.

Nicole:

That excitement again of the early church, we've lost a little bit of that.

Sharon:

Yep. I think we've become complacent. That's what I wrote. It's so easy to get complacent. You know, and the word that they use is devoted. They devoted themselves to the teaching, the fellowship, the Communion and the prayer. And you know, am I devoted to that? Or is it routine?

Nicole:

Right.

Sharon:

You know, and when something's new, it's obviously easier.

Nicole:

Oh yeah. There's always that new excitement.

Sharon:

But we still need to be devoted. And also they made sure that some of their gatherings were in public places, so they were continuing to bring people to Christ. (Nicole: Right) And sometimes I think we're a little too isolated. I love that, one thing that our church does do, we do baptisms outdoors in a public park.

Nicole:

Yes. Oh, I love that.

Sharon:

Because that's an example of what the early church did. We're doing our thing. We're not forcing it on other people, but they can see it.

Nicole:

Yes. And they're free to ask questions and go, why are they doing that?

Sharon:

Exactly. I think we need more of that.

Nicole:

Yes, for sure.

Sharon:

I really do. Because otherwise we're so insulated that people don't always see it. So if we wanna take a page from the early church have more, you know, outdoor services in parks.

Nicole:

Yes. Especially after Covid, we've become even more isolated and more comfortable with our private Christian lives because you know of ridicule and the fact that we were isolated for so long in homes and watching messages online. It's a great medium. It's wonderful. We have it. But are we still staying inside?

Sharon:

Right. People need to see us being happy together.

Nicole:

Yes. Absolutely.

Sharon:

So we need to be not just in church doing it.

Nicole:

Mm-Hmm. Absolutely. And is my heart excited to go to church on Sunday? I'll tell you. Sometimes dragging four girls out the door on Sunday, (Sharon: Oh, goodness) I am not devoted to going to church that morning. (No) We need to get there. (Yes)

Sharon:

I can't, I don't even wanna tell you how many short words there would be in the car before we'd pull in.

Nicole:

Oh, it's awful.

Sharon:

And then go, oh, hello.

Nicole:

Good morning.

Sharon:

Yes,

Nicole:

It's terrible. I'm like, you guys, we have to be nice for at least 20 minutes in the car before we're nice to people in church.

Sharon:

Yes. Yes. Oh, man. Well, let me close us. Let's pray. Oh, Father, thank you for just this little push, this nudge for Nicole and me to be devoted to the fellowship. And Father, help us in our own little church to find more ways to do it publicly, so that those around us see the joy, see the gladness of heart that comes from worshipping you. Thank you, Lord. Thank you for these lessons from the early church. Help all of us to put them into practice this week. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Nicole:

Amen. Well, that was some sermon we just heard through Luke's history of the early church in the Book of Acts. It's amazing that 3000 people followed Jesus that day. That was surely God's power at work in lives. We'd love to learn more about you and your life. Would you consider sending us an email and letting us know how and when you listen to Sweet Selah Moments? You can write us anytime at sharon@sweetselah.org. You can find us on Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube, and also on our website SweetSelah.org. Please consider donating so we can continue sharing this program with you. And come back next week for more discovery as we continue to learn about the very first days of the Christian Church. We're calling episode 129, But What Can You Do? This is an intriguing title. Join us next week and until then, may God bless you and guide you through his powerful Holy Spirit in all that you do.

Speaker 1:

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